1 Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

or quilt which they make from their own worn-out clothes or even from the cast-off clothes of others. These quilts and mattresses are used in place of blankets and other forms of bedding usually found in villages, and present a ragged sight when taken out in the sun to air. The Rautiya Kols have a taboo for the Kathariya mattress. Rautiya Kols generally despise this *kurhi* because they do menial work, but this cannot be the main reason.

All the evidence that we were able to collect indicates that Russell and Hiralal are incorrect in their conclusions regarding the Kathariyas having the mattress as their totem. They say: "A member of this sept (Katharia) must never have a mattress in his house nor wear clothes sewn in cross-pieces as mattresses are sewn. The word *kathri* should never be mentioned before him as he thinks some great misfortune would thereby happen to his family, but this belief is falling into abeyance."[1] The actual facts which we have carefully checked seem to be the exact opposite.

8. *Khairwar.* This is probably the same as a group in Chota Nagpur known under the slightly different name of Kharias. In the year 1937 Sarat Chandra Roy[2] published in two volumes a complete and comprehensive study of this important group. The Khairwars in the Central Provinces seem to be a mixture of jungle tribes and are often confused with the Gonds. Russell and Hiralal say that the most probable derivation of the name is from the *khair* or catechu tree (*Acacia catechu*) from which catechu, "any one of the several dry, earthy, or resinlike, astringent substances got from certain tropical plants and used in tanning and dyeing" is manufactured. We were given this same information: this group is called Khairwars because its members make *khair*. They are also said to be a low type of Kol and this work is despised as a profession for now-a-days it is done only by primitive jungle dwellers. It is not unlikely that a group of Kols at one time were active in preparing *khair* and so received this name, but it is more probable that they are somehow related to the Kharias of Chota Nagpur.

9. *Kulmangan.* This is another of the so-called lower types of Kols, the name being derived from *mangna*, "to ask." It appears that during the time of birth, marriage, death, or special religious functions, members of this *kurhi*, if such it may be called, make it a practice to ask alms from Kols. On certain occasions they are said to play the *sarangi*—a one-stringed musical instrument. There is no

1 Russell and Hiralal, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. III. p. 510, see also Vol. I, p. 91.
2 *The Kharias.*

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

789 823 *Iron* is, on the whole, probably the most common of protective metals; and while some put copper above iron, nevertheless in the case of the Kols, iron appears to be more widely used than copper. The use of iron takes many forms. A woman should always have a bit of iron about her as she is usually exposed to evil influences more than are the men folk. This may take the form of a bracelet, an anklet, a ring on the finger, or an iron ring about the neck. Again it may be just a piece of the metal tied somewhere in the garments or on a string about the waist. [755] A sick man should always have iron about him to prevent further demonic influences during his period of helplessness. An iron key is a protective and even nails in shoes are useful in this respect. [513] A piece of iron ought to be under the head as one sleeps and iron nails are often driven into the four corners of a wooden cot should the Kol sleep on one. In the case of children iron helps to repel the evil eye. [585] At the wedding time the bridegroom carries iron about with him, and iron is found in the wedding booth.

Iron protects houses from the entry of evil spirits and makes their habitation there impossible. Therefore, when a house is built [342] iron is buried under the floor, particularly near the threshold. Even though unseen by the human eye it will influence the demons and they fear to enter and abide in the house. [775] Perhaps *bhuts* are thought of as still living in the stone age and dreading the new-fangled iron and its power to break the strongest things of which they know.

789 *Lac*, obtained from the gum of the *Khairwar* tree (*Acacia catechu*), and prepared in the form of bangles and beads, averts the evil eye and [314] wards off spirits. This is variously coloured.

Lampblack is widely used for children and protects them from the evil eye. [751] While it disguises them and renders them less attractive, it also has the practical purpose of protecting the eye from the glare of the sun. The lampblack, mixed with oil to make a paste, is placed just below the eyes and often gives the child a weird and unnatural appearance.

789 237 291 *Leather* is a very common devil-scarer throughout India and has its uses for the Kols, such as the custom of employing it in connection with the building of houses. For protection, in this instance, an old shoe will generally be found stuck somewhere about the wall which is being built. This is apparent in the picture appearing in connection with building customs.[1] If they can be afforded, leather shoes with nails in them are a double protection, and no Kol goes on a long journey without taking a pair of country shoes with him even though he seldom uses [484] them. He will carry them hanging from a stick or in his hands.

1 See plate VIII.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

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[595] be two wives in my house and they will always fight and quarrel, which I don't like at all. And I can only support one wife.

I have a second wife, but only one. She helps me in my daily [434] work and comes out with me into the fields and helps me dig and till the ground and together we earn about eight annas a day. At other times we work on the farm which we rent. We have about one acre and must give one-third of the produce to the *malguzar*. If the crops [241] are good we get some benefit, but if they are not it is not worth the labour. I sow my fields in pulse, wheat and *kodo*. (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*). Often we get enough to eat for the whole year from our field. For about four to six months we eat *kodo* and then for three to four months we eat wheat and in this way provide for our food. [464] This year (1937) our crops failed badly and we did not get much out of our field so we have to work as day labourers wherever we could get work. Farming brings us less return than daily coolie work, even though the latter is irregular. I have also taken a contract for a piece [427 314] of ground where lac trees grow and pay rupees five a year for the privilege of collecting the lac. The contract is for twenty years and is made with the owner of the forest in Silgnor village. I also graze my cattle there, and after deducting my animal tax I get a profit of Rs. ten or twelve per year. I don't like to work as a coolie as we are often mistreated when under the authority of one man. I prefer to take or make a contract with people who are good farmers and thus go and work in their fields according to my own free choice and desire. Thus I am saved from all kinds of mistreatments which are meted out by owners or supervisors, and this, which is true of me, is true of all members of our Kol community. We would prefer to die of hunger than to have our liberty taken away and be treated as slaves.

Once when I was very young a great crisis befell our family. [731] It was at the time when almost the whole of India suffered from a great famine (1899-1900). As my father was dead the support of the family fell upon the shoulders of my mother. Every morning and evening she used to cut grass wherever she could gather it and sell it to the people who could pay. She used to bring roots from the jungles and prepare a sort of bread for us out of them. She even brought the leaves of certain kinds of trees and made them do as vegetables in our rude food. Oh, it was a very hard time for us, but a mother's love and care saved us from that great famine. She used to work all day long; and though she seemed to be very old she worked like a young woman. Finally, after it was over she fell sick and died. She blessed us before she died. Her blessings are still with me and since then I have not suffered the want of anything. Now I have a *pakka* house.